

2 Samuel 21:1-14

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[0 : 00] Samuel chapter 21, 2 Samuel chapter 21. We'll be in the first 14 verses, 2 Samuel 21 verses 1 through 14 this evening.

As we're just continuing to make our way through scripture. And we're very quickly coming near the end of 2 Samuel. We are really in what most Bible scholars will tell you is kind of an appendix to the end of the book.

That these events aren't chronological. So the chronological events as it pertains to David's life wrapped up in the 20th chapter.

Now we have some events that kind of lets us know kind of some other things that took place. In preparation for that last chapter. We'll get to that in just a minute though. Alright, let's pray. Lord, we're so thankful.

Thankful to have the opportunity. Lord, to come together. Thankful to be able to come midweek in the fellowship with brothers and sisters. Lord, thankful to be able to open up the word of God together. Lord, we pray that you would lead us and guide us as we open it up.

[1 : 11] We pray that the truth of scripture would resonate within our hearts and minds. That we would learn more of you. We would learn more of ourselves. We would learn more of, Lord, our walk in faithfulness.

Lord, our obedience in the world you've put us in. Lord, we pray that you lead and guide in our time together. Pray that you be glorified in all that is done throughout this place. And we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. 2 Samuel 21 and the last chapter of the book, 24, have very similar parallels.

The 21st chapter tells us of a matter which resulted from the sin of Saul. While the 24th chapter tells us of a tragedy that resulted from the sin of David.

Both of them are failures that kind of took place while they were reigning as kings that had national implications. We could take the time to look at the two chapters together.

[2 : 16] But I haven't done that because sandwiched between the two of them are at the end of the 21st chapter. It's kind of just some other events of David's life. His reigning and his ruling and the battles that they fought with the Philistines.

And then we have the psalm of deliverance of David and his praise and his prayer. And then we get to that 24th chapter, which is so instrumental. We really need to see it on its own because it is there, if you will remember, in which David made the great implication that I will not offer to the Lord my God that which costs me nothing.

And it is there in which we see really the fullness of Scripture just running rampant. We'll see that as we get to it. But in the 21st chapter, admittedly, the first 14 verses are very difficult.

So we read them, we'll kind of scratch our head and go, man, that's a difficult passage of Scripture. And it brings with it its challenges in interpreting it in light of the rest of Scripture.

And therein lies our calling. Because when we read Scripture, we know that no Scripture will ever contradict Scripture. So if we see what appears to be a contradiction, then we know that there is no contradiction.

- [3 : 32] So we must dig a little further. We must read a little more. We must not necessarily read more commentators, or even though those are things that we can get to later on in our study, but get more into the Word and try to figure out what's going on in that setting.
- This is one of those passages in which, I mean, honestly, if we weren't preaching through 2 Samuel, I probably would not pick this passage and say, hey, let's preach this message out of this one.
- Because it is a very difficult passage. But yet it's here. And it's in here, as the Word of God tells us, for our edification, rebuke, correction, admonition, it is in here to challenge us.
- It's in here to call us. It's in here to encourage us to faithfulness and holiness. It's in here to show us the holy standard of God and even the failures of man.
- So we'll see tonight in the first 14 verses decisions with devastating outcomes. Decisions, I did plural because this is part one.
- [4 : 38] Part two will be the 24th chapter. With devastating outcomes. We need to look at them individually as opposed to simultaneously so that we can really do them due justice and not just lump them into a generality because we come on nights like tonight to study the Word and to learn from it.
- So the first 14 verses, the 2 Samuel 21 says, Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year. And David saw the presence of the Lord.
- And the Lord said, It is for Saul and his bloody house because he put the Gibeonites to death. So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the sons of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites.
- And the sons of Israel made a covenant with them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the sons of Israel and Judah. Thus David said to the Gibeonites, What should I do for you?
- And how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord? Then the Gibeonites said to him, We have no concern of silver or gold with Saul or his house, nor is it for us to put any man to death in Israel.
- [5 : 49] And he said, I will do for you whatever you say. So they said to the king, the man who consumed us, and planned to exterminate us from remaining within any border of Israel, Let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the Lord.
- And the king said, I will give them. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath of the Lord which was between them, between David and Saul's son, Jonathan.
- So the king took the two sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Ahai, Armoni, and Mephibosheth, whom she had borne to Saul, and five sons of Merib, the daughter of Saul, whom she had borne to Adriel, the son of Barzeli, the Mahalithite.
- Then he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the Lord, so that the seven of them fell together, and they were put to death in the first days of harvest at the beginning of barley harvest.
- And Rizpah, the daughter of Ahiah, took Sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock from the beginning of harvest until it rained on them from the sky, and she allowed neither the birds of the sky to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.
- [7 : 07] When it was told David what Rizpah, the daughter of Ahiah, the concubine of Saul, had done, then David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan, his son, from the men of Jebesh-Galib, who had stolen them from the open square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines struck down Saul of Gibeah.

He brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan, his son, from there, and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged. They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan, his son, in the country of Benjamin in Zillah, in the grave of Kish, his father.

Thus they did all that the king commanded, and after that God was moved by prayer for the land. 2 Samuel 21, verses 1 through 14. I told you it's a difficult passage.

You have seven men hanged on a tree and left exposed to the elements. If you do the terminology and you follow what is consistent of that day for six months, and the mother of two of them is there protecting them, their bodies, for six months open, and in the end David brings them and buries them with Saul and Jonathan.

Admittedly, the reason there's so much difficulty here is because it appears from the outset to be a human sacrifice. It appears to be a sacrifice for sin given as an appeasement for an angry God, something that we would find consistent with many of the Canaanites who inhabited the land when Joshua and the nation of Israel came in, and God had judged the many of the Canaanites because of this action.

[8 : 47] But the first problem we encounter with that is that was not the trait or the character of the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites did not do that. They weren't those who offered human sacrifices.

They weren't of those who did such things, and we'll get into that in just a moment. So when we read the passage, we are just from the very beginning struck with questions as to what's going on here and why do we even have this included.

Hopefully by the time we're done, we will understand it. But the main theme that we see is the decisions with devastating outcomes. The first thing that we see as it pertains to this decision by Saul is we see the injustice of sin.

The injustice of sin. It tells us that in the days of King David, there was a famine in the land for three years. We don't know when this happened. We're not told what part of David's reign this took place in, but we are told why it happens.

David seeks the Lord God and asks why there's a land. Because see, if you remember, one of the covenantal promises of God is that he would not withhold the early reigns and the latter reigns. God had declared that if they walked in obedience and faithfulness to him, he would bring the rains upon the land and the fields would produce their harvest and the animals and the livestock would multiply.

[10 : 05] This is part of the blessing tied to obedience. So anytime there was a famine for one year, like, oh, well, it just didn't rain. But famine three years in a row, now God is disciplining us and chastising us for a reason.

So David sought the Lord. And the Lord, it says, either through a prophet, we don't know, but God made it very clear that the reason this is happening is because of what Saul had done to the Gibeonites, that Saul had murdered the Gibeonites.

You remember the Gibeonites, right? They were the ones in the book of Joshua that heard the nation of Israel was going through the land and they were winning all these battles. Instead of making alliances and allegiances with other people and trying to build an army, the Gibeonites decided that they were going to scheme and plot and they put on old clothes and they wore out food and their sandals were worn out and they showed up to the nation of Israel to make a covenant of peace with them and said that they were from a very far away land.

And the nation of Israel, if you remember, Joshua and the leaders, they didn't seek the Lord. They made a haste decision and they entered into a covenant and then three days later they realized they lived within the land. But they had made a covenant with the Gibeonites and since they had made a covenant with the Gibeonites, they couldn't kill them because they said, we will give you peace.

And they had told them that. And then the Gibeonites were forced into slavery. Actually, they became wood bearers of the temple of the Lord.

[11 : 26] They carried the wood. So they were exposed to the things. That's important, by the way. Stay, hold on to that. They were exposed to the Lord God in worship because they were those who carried wood back and forth and were wood choppers and wood toters and all that good fun stuff, right?

That's what they did. That was their enslavement. But yet the covenant was that the people of Israel would not harm them. We see the injustice of sin in that Saul cares less about the covenant and decides he's going to kill them.

Saul is really not so concerned about a covenant made back then as he is concerned about a convenience of right now. Saul decides that just because Joshua and the leaders of Israel had made a covenant, it does not really mean that he has made a covenant and he is looking at it as a matter of convenience.

You say, well, the word says because of the zeal he had for Israel and the house of Judah. Yes, possibly. But if we read it a little bit further, we'll also know that the land in which the Gibeonites lived in was in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin, which, by the way, is the land of Saul, right?

And Saul had one of these habits of every time he promoted a man, he would give him land. And more than likely, out of a desire to have more land, he decided he needed to push them out of it. And see, the injustice is he was trying to wipe them out.

[12 : 49] We call this genocide today. He wanted to completely wipe them out and get rid of them. He wanted to do away with them. He didn't just want to move them away. He wanted to slaughter them. And God makes it very clear.

God longs for his people to be people of their word, right? Let your yes be yes and your no be no. We're not supposed to go back on a word. And I say we in that. God is a God of covenantal relationships.

And we expect that when God enters into a covenant, God is going to keep his side of the covenant. As a matter of fact, we know that because God is a God of covenantal relationships and he is faithful to adhere to his covenants.

And his expectation is for his people to do the same. So when Saul disregarded the covenant, it was grand injustice to the Gibeonites regardless of their ancestry.

Because the nation of Israel had entered into a covenant and said, we will not kill you. Saul decided one day, I'm going to kill you. Now, friend, listen to me.

[13 : 52] Anytime we begin to go back and forth, as the book of James says, like the waves of the sea, then there is grand injustice done to other individuals and there is great devastation soon to follow.

With little disregard, Saul made a decision. But we know the punishment for that decision is delayed, which leads us to the second thing.

Not only do we see the injustice of sin, we see the impact of sin. One of the things the Old Testament teaches us over and over and over again is that sin is never an isolated event.

That is, sin doesn't just affect the individual who commits the sin. Sin has a grand impact.

And God is so consistent. I don't know if you've noticed that. In the Old Testament, and it spills over into the New Testament when we look at the church, and this is why Paul writes so much, so harsh of rebukes to those within the church, and we see even in the book of Acts, the sin that had an effect on other individuals there, and we begin to see how it's played out, that though God deals with individuals, those individuals are always intimately connected to a corporate body.

[15 : 15] So when one individual sins in the nation of Israel, the whole nation is defiled. This is what we get when we open up the book of Numbers or the book of Leviticus, and we begin to read all these laws and rules and regulations.

The reason I need for you to be holy and the reason you need for me to be holy is because my unholiness taints your holiness.

That's another way of saying this. My sin has a great impact upon your life. The sin of the individual can bring tragedy upon the nation. We see that, right?

We see it with Saul here. When David seeks the Lord, it is the Lord who says the famine, which has happened in the land for three years, is because of Saul. So the first impact we see right away is, I mean, Saul's dead.

If David's king, Saul is dead. We understand that chronologically, right? And this was in the days of King David. But yet, even after Saul is dead, the nation reels from three years of famine.

[16 : 22] This is a very agriculturally driven society. Your wealth is determined not by how much you have in the bank account, but by how much grain and how much livestock you possess.

And one thing to greatly influence that is for it not to reign, for there would be a famine in the land. We've seen that throughout scripture. But yet, the whole nation here is impacted because Saul made a decision.

Because sin always goes further than just that moment. We just left the story of David and his sin with Bathsheba, and it took, you know, multiple chapters and a long time to see the end result of that.

Right? With Absalom's rebellion and all the discord that's happening, we're really not done with that yet. It spills over further and further and further because the impact of sin greatly outruns the influence of the moment.

There was a moment in time when Saul sought to kill the Gibeonites. That was the moment. The impact of that sin now has resonated so much so that the author here has to define for us who the Gibeonites are.

[17 : 31] He tells us, well, they're not of the nation of Israel. They were some of the ones that still stayed in the land. And this was during the days of David. David didn't know what this had happened. David had to pray and ask the Lord if this happened. All we know is now there's a famine in the land.

Why? Because sin has grand impact. And not only has it brought financial crisis, not only has it brought health crisis, not only has it brought physical crisis, because there's no rain in the land, there's a famine, there's a spiritual crisis as well.

Because did you notice in the 14th verse that after God is appeased, it makes this great declaration. And after this, God was moved by the prayers of the land of Israel.

So evidently, God wasn't hearing the prayers of the people. God was not hearing the prayers of the people because of the sin of the man. You begin to see the impact, right?

This man's decision in a moment of convenience has now led to tragedy among the nation financially, physically, and spiritually. Because not only is there no rain, there's also no answers to prayer.

[18 : 37] God's no longer moved by prayer. Why? Because the nation has undealt with sin. Now friends, stay with me.

We can't leave these things in the Old Testament, right? Because though we're under the covenant, and we'll get to the covenant of the blood of Christ, the hope it has for us in the next portion, but the character of God hasn't changed.

Why was Paul so ardent in the New Testament about rebuking brothers and sisters in Christ who had sinned? I mean, do you ever notice in the writings of Paul that Paul calls out his friends, but he also calls out his enemies?

I mean, he calls them by name. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. Stay far away from him. I don't know about you, but I kind of like that. Why? Because he knows that individual sin, if left unchecked, cause corporate problems.

And it really influences and impacts the multitudes. Church history shows us the same thing, right?

[19 : 46] It just takes one sin that runs rapid, and the impact that it carries on. And I'm not even talking about very past church history. We can just go recent church history and begin to see these matters.

The impact of sin is really astounding. And we see it here. Saul's dead. Yet people are suffering.

Their prayers are unheard. And you say, well, this doesn't seem fair. That's what gets us to the last thing. And that is the implication of sin.

Evidently, there's more going on here than what meets the eye. The implication of sin.

David prays, and God reveals to him, the Lord God reveals to him, it's because of what Saul did to the Gibeonites. David goes to the Gibeonites. We have to give credit, by the way, David does everything right in this chapter.

[20 : 48] Even his concern, he honors Saul. I mean, you notice, he honors Saul by giving him a proper burial. Jonathan and seven relatives of Saul, he honors them.

He honors the lady who stayed with her sons. He honors by giving them a proper burial. I mean, a royal burial. He brings them back. He does all those things.

He cries out to the Lord his God here. He goes to the Gibeonites, and he confesses, and says, okay, what can we do? But we notice here, okay, the Gibeonites, what were they?

Wood toters of the temple, right? Okay, so let's stay consistent here. The Gibeonites said, we have no concern for silver and gold. That is, money won't do us any good.

They said, we don't want any of the possessions of the house of Saul. I mean, they're slaves in the land, but they said, we don't want his land. And they said, and we're not concerned to kill any man of Israel.

[21 : 44] Do you notice that? They said, it's not that we just won't give us somebody, and we're going to kill somebody. So, okay, so now we understand it's not just a murderous ambition they have. But then we come to this point where it said, but give us seven sons of Saul.

Now, David, by the way, evidently Saul has two relatives named Mephibosheth. He has two. There's Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, and there's Mephibosheth, the son of, I mean, the son of Jonathan, and there's Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's concubine.

The son of Jonathan, David spares because of his covenant. He's not going to go back on that covenant. Saul went back on the covenant of Israel and sought to kill the Gibeonites.

David refuses to go back on his covenant and spares the life of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. So he's consistent. But the Gibeonites asked for seven men of the house of Saul.

And that bothered me for a long time because it just doesn't seem right. And I wrestled with that most of the week. I'll just be honest with you so far. Man, that's just a difficult passage.

[22 : 59] And the reason we understand this here, okay? The Gibeonites told us of wood there around the temple, so they have to understand the sacrificial system a little bit because the wood is used for the altar.

They're there. The book of Numbers gives us all the sacrifices of the season, all the sacrifice required for the people, and it tells us what they should give in light of what sin and how they should do this in light of that.

But in Numbers chapter 35, it's very clear. It's speaking of the city of refuge and the places where the manslayer can flee to. In Numbers 35, it tells us this, that for the man who murders another individual, there is no sacrifice.

Now, this is where the covenants differ, okay? This is the covenant of the law. This is not the covenant of the cross. This is not the covenant of Christ's blood. This is the covenant of the law.

So at that time, holiness before God was according to the standard of the law. In Numbers 35, it tells us that for someone who willfully murders another individual, there is no sacrifice.

[24 : 05] The only thing that will appease the Lord's anger is corporal punishment, that man's death. Eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, life for life.

And it tells us that in context, that if someone flees to the city of refuge, there really is no refuge, because if the town elders and the leaders and the priests are there, and they judge with the wisdom of God, because God had appointed them to be judged, and they determined that this man did indeed kill those individuals, or that individual, willfully murdered him, then don't spare him.

There is no refuge for that man. That man dies. So the Gibeonites more than likely knew that. Seven is a number of completion and fullness, so seven seems to be the number, like the full appeasement.

We don't know how many people Saul killed. So they knew that the only appeasement for murder was the shedding of blood. So we can go, okay, that's fine.

But then we have this quandary in Deuteronomy chapter 24. Deuteronomy chapter 24, I believe it's the 16th verse, tells us this, that the son should not pay for the sins of the father, and the father should not pay for the sins of the son.

[25 : 21] So on surface level, it seems as if we have a contradiction in scripture. Because if the sons shouldn't pay for the sins of the father, then these seven men should not have to die, because Saul killed some individuals, because Saul's already dead.

But yet we do see, at the end of this, when these individuals die, that God is appeased, the holiness of God is appeased. I believe the, and this is just, this is in my study.

I believe the key to all that is in how God answers David. Okay? And it shows us the implication of sin.

It says, this is what the Lord said. David's praying and says, why? Why is this happening? And I know we have to go back to the first. That first verse, it says, it is for Saul, but don't stop there, and his bloody house.

In the original wording, it means his house of bloodshed. The only way we can reconcile that the only appeasement for murder is the loss of the life of the one who committed murder, and that the sins of the father should not be paid for by the life of the sons.

[26 : 50] The sons should not pay for the sins of the father. The only way we can reconcile that in light of the fact that Saul is already dead is that God is declaring here, this was not just a Saul problem.

It was Saul and his whole household that was trying to destroy the Gibeonites. Because you notice, these seven men are from the household of Saul. The only reconciliation with Scripture is more than likely, these seven men were involved in it too.

And I don't think we're having to jump to conclusions that aren't there. Because the wording literally says, his household of bloodshed.

It was not just Saul. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, more than likely was not involved because he was crippled in both feet.

Remember that? And he was young when Jonathan dies. We don't know how old these men are. But if we want to stay consistent with the holiness of God, and we want to stay consistent with the fair judgment of God, and we want to stay consistent with the rest of Scripture, then we have to see this implication here.

[28 : 06] These men are not just innocent bystanders. Which brings us to this reality is that sin will always come to a day of judgment.

And as Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5, verse 24, the sins of some men are revealed immediately.

Others go before them until the day of judgment. But all sin will be found out. These men came to a day of reckoning, and we would like to read into the text where they were just innocent men that David chose at random, but do you notice the Gibeonites asked for them because they knew.

God was appeased because righteous judgment had been taking place. God responds. God responds. Friend, listen to me. These are decisions with devastating outcomes.

I'm sure after Saul dies, these matters die down. Nobody really knew what happened. David, the new king, had no idea about this, right? Because he had to ask God.

[29 : 22] These men probably thought we got away with it. We don't know how long had transpired. We're not told that in Scripture. It really doesn't matter. Why?

Because God always brings sin to judgment. Always. He's a righteous and holy God, and he calls his people to live righteous and holy lives.

When they made this decision to do these things, these matters, Saul dies in Gilboa. These men die. If you notice, these seven, and Saul, and Jonathan, unfortunately, was with Saul, all suffered the same shame.

Bodies exposed, open to the elements, hung up, which is a, in the book of Deuteronomy, is a declaration of being cursed of the Lord. David honors them and brings all their bones back and gives them a proper burial.

So we see a little bit of a display of grace and mercy there. But the one thing we really see in this chapter is that that moment of decision had devastating outcomes for years ongoing.

[30 : 40] And we see it being played out in 2 Samuel 21, verses 1 through 14. We will see the mirror of that in the 24th chapter where David makes a decision and multitudes and multitudes and multitudes of people suffer.

But yet, in the midst of that tragedy, we also see this blessed hope of a coming redeemer. And we close this book.

Thank you, Thank you, brothers.